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United States to Provide Disaster Relief Assistance in Response to the Earthquake and Tsunami in Solomon Islands

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society \$50,000 to support disaster relief efforts in Temotu Province in response to the magnitude 8.0 earthquake and tsunami on February 6.

On February 8, the Government of Solomon Islands declared a state of disaster for Nendo and other Santa Cruz Islands in Temotu Province. On February 13, U.S. Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu Walter North issued a disaster declaration to support the immediate relief efforts to disaster-affected populations in the Solomon Islands, particularly to address their critical water, sanitation, and hygiene needs.

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is responsible for providing non-food humanitarian assistance in response to international crises and disasters.

USAID/OFDA has a long history of working in close partnership with the governments of Melanesian countries. Since 2011, USAID/OFDA provided \$153,352 to the Vanuatu Red Cross Society and \$150,050 to the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society for the Together Building Resilience (TBR) Program—a community-based DRR program focused on strengthening and building DRR knowledge and skills in targeted vulnerable communities. Through the TBR program, USAID/OFDA is working to reduce the vulnerability of communities in these two countries through activities such as evacuation exercises, first aid training, provision of first aid and disaster preparedness kits, and training on disaster response.

In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided approximately \$1 million to the French Red Cross (FRC) to continue support for the TBR program in the two countries. Specifically, FRC will compliment the work of the respective member societies and support community-developed plans to increase access to safe drinking water, build cyclone-resistant houses, and improve radio communications to provide more reliable disaster early warning systems.

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